



DISTRICT 1010 2014

EMBRACING YOUTH
Rotary Club of Peterhead

Presented by John Johnston
Youth Outdoor Experiences 2014



Slide 1 John Embracing Youth

President Ann, Honorary Guests, Fellow Rotarians and Friends.

Hello there 1010, Are you all having a good time? Good!

I want to thank you for this opportunity to deliver this presentation on our “Embracing Youth” project “Outdoor Challenge”.

We are members of The Rotary Club of Peterhead, and in fact, also past Presidents.

Winston Churchill once said that there was only 2 things more difficult than public speaking; climbing a wall leaning toward you, and kissing a girl leaning away from you ...

First of all I would like to introduce my assistant Robbie.



Slide 2 John

Robbie Emslie was brought up in Donside, Aberdeenshire, and the son of a farming family. Left school at fifteen and completed an apprenticeship as a watchmaker. Served 20 years as a Retained Firefighter in Alford then Peterhead. Established Robert Emslie The-Jeweller in Peterhead in 1982 and has been a Rotarian since 1985.



Slide 3 Robbie

It's my pleasure to introduce John, John Johnston a well-known and respected Peterhead businessman with a successful scaffolding business, “Northern Platforms & Stagings ltd”.

Born in Glasgow's East End around 1958, John has two daughters and a granddaughter.

 Slide 4 John

“Embracing Youth Projects”. “Embracing”? What do we mean by that? Well, I would like you to think it means, to take up enthusiastically, because let’s be honest, there’s no point in doing something like this if you do not adopt it and receive it with a warm welcome.

So why a “disadvantaged youth project”? Let me tell you why I think the age and background of the candidates is so important.

Our aim is to reach young carers, socially deprived, children, children of families with limited resources.

I am very much moulded into my background, you see I came from a very poor upbringing in the East end of Glasgow, at this time my mum was bringing up four kids on her own. My dad died in an industrial accident when I was around 5yrs old.

Not to say it was a poor part of Glasgow but if you needed a pair of shoes where I came from, you went up to the local swimming baths!!

Now, when I was a youth of around 15yrs of age I was very good at running, I suppose that’s because I had plenty of practice running away from the police! Now, a teacher named Mr McLeod decided to enter me in the All Strathclyde schools “Cross Country Championships”, so every weekend he took me away with his local running club to train for the event. I came in 8th out of around 150 kids. Now that’s not bad, but it wasn’t the running I enjoyed although don’t get me wrong that was good.

 Slide 5 John

It was the training trips every weekend to all these far flung exotic venues like Carbeth, Milngavie and Arrochar. You see I had never been out of the east end tenements before, and seeing these places changed me forever; they changed my attitude to life and what I wanted out of it.

After leaving school with no real job prospects and a few skirmishes with the law, I started thinking about the places Mr McLeod took me, and I really wanted to get back there. I thought about the Climbing, Walking and Camping I had seen, so I made a conscious decision to earn money and get back out to these places. Places I knew I loved, places that seemed like another galaxy away compared to “Bridgeton” although I now know they were only forty miles up the road!

 Slide 6 Robbie

The Defined Benefits as we understand them.

Challenging outdoor experiences impacts powerfully upon a young person’s intellectual, physical, spiritual, social and moral development.



It contributes to personal relationships and social awareness and develops skills for life and the world of work. Qualities such as a sense of responsibility and a purpose in life are nurtured.

There is also a great deal of intrinsic enjoyment and satisfaction to be experienced from participation in outdoor activities.



The purposeful use of leisure time is increasingly seen as making an important contribution to a fulfilling lifestyle.

 Slide 7 John

Now let me continue my story if we can I would like to fast forward 40years. I am now the Managing Director of a successful construction company, and we employ around 35 people. I know I would never have got here if it wasn't for the chance I was given as a "Youth" by Mr McLeod, he gave me the opportunity and I have never forgotten that.

So when I became the President of Rotary in Peterhead, I made the decision that I was going to do an outdoor project for disadvantaged kids; I wanted to catch them before they left school. I suppose I figured in some kind of romantic way that what worked for me all those many years ago, could somehow work for the youth in today's world.

We needed a Plan, and that's where Robbie came in. We are both outdoor people, Rob's a hill-walker in his spare time and I am BASI 3 qualified ski instructor and enthusiastic climber.

 Slide 8 John

We knew we would need money. The projected cost at this stage was around £4.5K. We also knew how important it would be to get the club behind us.

Other problems we anticipated were how to find the candidates, course providers and sponsorship, after several meetings and forming a special project group we decided to offer twelve youth's six different outdoor activities over the Winter and Spring terms.

This was around the time I wrote a letter to ADG Keith Hopkins, and after a positive response from Keith I was advised to contact Janet Low about applying for a Matching Grant. I was advised that matching grants are awarded by a team and they have to decide which projects they feel are the most deserving.

No certainties there then, but about six weeks later, Janet contacted me to say she was pleased to inform me that my district grant application had been successful.

Needless to say we were over the moon, the project was on and my theory that you can change the attitude of kids if you give them a chance, would soon be put to the test. Our project was accepted and we were committed to making it happen.

You can plan resource and execute but ultimately you want success. How do we know it's been a success?

Evidence! We need evidence.

Willy Angus, an infamous poacher fae Lewis, standing on the shores of Loch Seaforth with a bucket.

Two lobsters in the bucket. Big Donald jumps out fae behind a bush, "I've got ye Angus". Shh Donald don't upst the competitors, you see were about to hy a race. "Race" ochone ive taught these two to swim to the shore and were going to have a race.

Jist watch Donald. (throughs both lobsters in) “Nothing’s happin” says Donald.. “The Lobsters” “Now what Lobsters would that be Donald”.

 **Slide 9 Robbie**

Our Program.

 **The CONCEPT** To provide an Outdoor Experience that was otherwise unavailable to disadvantaged youth. **The PLAN** Decisions on **what** we're doing, **who** will be involved, **how**, **when** and **where**. **Our RESOURCES** Personal skill and qualifications, willing support personnel, Rotary District & Club Financial and technical support.**Slide 10 Robbie** **EXECUTION** Undertaken by the agreed providers and personnel both Rotarian and outsourced at the beginning of this year.

14th February saw the four day ski tuition start at Abernethy Outdoor Centre. Seven students enjoyed three days at the Lecht Ski Centre, and the final day at Cairngorm on an exceptionally busy day with a snow storm affecting visibility.

16th March was a one day walk round Loch Muick (**Mick**), Ballater. Students learn navigation and mountain skills.

11th April and we're back at Abernethy for the Mountain Biking, Hill Walking, Canoeing and Climbing. Delighted to announce that all events passed off safely, and were well appreciated.

 **Slide 11 Challenge Skiing**

Skied on perfect snow with great weather most days. Our students made rapid progress to the point of descending from the top to the bottom of Cairngorm Ski area.

An amazing achievement in four days of ski school.

 **Slide 12 Challenge Mountain Biking (Slow)**

The mountain bike route left directly from the centre and made its winding way over a low pass to the Ryovan (**Ryevon**) Bothy. Much trepidation and wobbles as we set off. The return was an exciting run with many fast downhill sections to everyone's pleasure.

 **Slide 13 Challenge Hill Walking**

There were two walks, the first with Bill Dallas a member of Braemar Mountain Rescue and qualified Mountain guide and instructor. He provided testing map reading challenges along with survival and a rescue carrying exercises.

Abernethy Outdoor Centre guided our party along Bhuachaille (**Buchal**) Ridge North of Loch Morlich.

 **Slide 14 Challenge Canadian Canoe**

Pleasant paddle though calm pools and steady waters of the Spey, we thought. Much fun and wetness.

 **Slide 15 Challenge Climbing**

Bright sunny day at Cummington Cliffs climbing and abseiling. All having a real go and succeeding. Wow confidence sky high.

Slide continued with John

Well, as bugs bunny used to say “That’s all for now Folks”...and I know some of you will be thinking, wait a minute, what about the candidates.

The kids themselves; what did they think of it. You see, my opinion on that matter would be rather bias, so why don’t the young attendees tell you themselves.

 **Slide 16 the view of the People who matter.**

Let’s hear from Kimberly then Josh and finally Sean.

 **Slide 17 John**

Well that’s about it really, except to extend a thank you to Rotary Club of Peterhead, District 1010 and everyone who got involved and helped us in one way or another.

One parting thought; I heard some-one say something on the radio the other day and I thought it was very apt. He said “People might forget what you did, they might even forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel!

“Embrace Youth Projects”

And thank you all again for taking the time...and thank you **Mr McLeod!**



Slide 18 Robbie

And finally from me

THE LEGACY

To enable our “Outdoor Challenge Project” to flourish in years to come.

For disadvantaged youth to benefit from this project we feel it would be best better run jointly by a number of clubs.

To that end we are speaking about the “Outdoor Challenge Project” to clubs in the district and hopefully establish if you feel there are disadvantaged youths in your area that might benefit from this experience and your club might be interested.

With multiple club’s involved District **may** be position to provide further support.

Thanks you for hearing us.

Slide 19

The participants.

THE END

Only if time...



Slide 20 John

Possible Rotary Project conflict.

RYLA Rotary Youth Leadership Awards runs during July.

Our project is aimed to support disadvantaged youth and runs during the winter to spring season.

Is there conflict with RYLA? Let me say something at this point; I love RYLA I worked as a mentor at summer camp last year. I know what RYLA is and what it is about, there is no way our Project should be confused with RYLA our project was targeting a totally different type of youth. Our aim is to reach disadvantaged kids young carers, socially deprived and children with one kind of handicap or another.

Our Project was not aimed at “Youth Leaders” our Project was a Winter/Spring camp over two weekends, not a summer camp.

I feel I need to make that very clear.

 Slide 21

Project threatening difficulties not published.

Hand-out only.

Candidate selection

One of the most surprising difficulties we met was securing kids to go on the trips, for one reason or another this proved really difficult, being one of the first clubs in 1010 to have an associate membership and that membership being Peterhead Academy you can understand why I thought this would be easy.

We were promised at an early stage that there would be no problem with the Academy supplying us with candidates in reality it never turned out that way. We have not to date resolved why there were difficulties and what they were.

PVG,s

If you are thinking of taking on a project like this it is worthwhile making sure you apply for your PVG,s at early point, as we very nearly had to cancel the whole project due non-appearance of these despite much chasing and many assurances. Our understanding is the cause of these delays has been resolved.

Insurance

This can be expensive because of the perceived dangerous nature of the activities make sure you contact Rotary and make sure insurance for outwith the residence is in place before embarking on any trips, the course providers do cover insurance while the kids are in their care. Our club incurred an unexpected £400.00 Road Traffic Accident bill to cover the excess on a hired mini bus. "Make contingency"

VAT

This was a shock to us and if not for a supplementary grant from district this could have also sunk the ship, When I received the quotes for the trips they were sent to me by email and there was no mention of VAT but when the bills came in there was a 20% VAT charge, this meant we had to pay around £1,000.00 more than we had budgeted for. It may be worth exploring getting the bill charged to a registered charity enabling recovery of the VAT.

 Slide 22 the Finances

As previously stated the original program was to cost £4,500

- Mini Bus hire and fuel.
- Abernethy Outdoor Centre for Skiing for eight student, provision of accommodation, food, equipment, and transport, ski passes for participants, instructor and two Rotary mentors. One student was unable to attend in the end.
- Abernethy Outdoor Centre for provision of accommodation, food, equipment, transport and instructors for a four day weekends for 12 people.

Other incidental expenses, outdoor clothing and personal equipment was donated for this and future events.

The one day hill-walk was done at no cost. Bill donated his time and transport and two Rotarian provided transport.

Unplanned expenses were a repair to the mini bus due to a road traffic accident £400 and the unaccounted for VAT £1,000.

The total was £6,000 in the end with an average cost of £500 per attendee. Not all attendees participated in the full course.

In the future we don't know if a matching grant would be available as we understand there would most likely be competing project.

1) When I was younger so much younger than today I didn't need anybody's help in any way...

2) When I find myself in times of trouble Mother Mary comes to me...

3) Yesterday when all my troubles seemed so far away....

4) Something in the way she moves that makes her like no other lover